

VZCZCXRO3970
OO RUEHROV RUEHTRO
DE RUEHKH #0439/01 0891422
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 301422Z MAR 09
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3395
INFO RUCNIAD/IGAD COLLECTIVE
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RHMFISS/CJTF HOA

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 000439

DEPT FOR SE GRATION, S/USSES, AF A A/S CARTER, AF/E
NSC FOR MGAVIN AND HUDSON
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN
ADDIS ABABA ALSO FOR USAU

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PREF](#) [EAID](#) [SOCI](#) [ASEC](#) [KPKO](#) [UNSC](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: ABYEI ADMINISTRATOR TRAVELS TO KHARTOUM TO RESOLVE FUNDING
PROBLEM

REF: KHARTOUM 217

11. (SBU) SUMMARY. Abyei Administrator Arop Mayok is in Khartoum to try to secure the release of GNU revenues for his Administration. The annual Misseriya cattle migration has gone fairly smoothly, but both the Dinka and Misseriya continue to be worried about security as they remain respectively south and north of Abyei town. Flooding and a food shortage in Twich County are causing an influx of additional IDPs into Agok, complicating humanitarian operations there. Mayok also expressed concern about the NCP pushing Misseriya settlers into the northern part of the interim borders of the region. END SUMMARY.

Progress on AIA Financing?

12. (SBU) On March 28, Abyei Administrator Arop Mayok met with Assessment and Evaluation Committee (AEC) Chairman Derek Plumbly and CDA Fernandez. Mayok was in Khartoum to try to resolve the standoff over the release of funds promised in the June 8, 2008 Abyei Roadmap Agreement to his Abyei interim Administration (AIA) (reftel). According to Mayok, there some snail-like progress as the Presidency now has instructed the Government of National Unity Finance Ministry to release revenues for the AIA budget. In the coming days, Mayok will meet with MOF officials to determine the mechanics of the funds transfer which should allow him to pay salaries and hire more staff for the first time.

13. (SBU) Chairman Plumbly said that he understood from MOF State Minister of Finance Lual Deng (SPLM) that the MOF has prepared a budget for the AIA of 50 million Sudanese Pounds (Note: US\$1:2.25 SDG. End note.) SDG 26.6 million of that will be for "staff" and SDG six million will be for "salaries." (Note: It is not clear how the staff and salaries categories relate to each other. End note.)

14. (SBU) Regarding the two percent of oil revenues that are to be used to benefit the Ngok Dinka, Mayok said that the nine Ngok Dinka chiefs have to meet and to agree to sign a letter, giving him a mandate to establish an account into which the funds can be deposited and authorizing him to supervise how the money is used. These monies are for the Ngok Dinka specifically, and will be separate from the AIA operating budget. Mayok now is seeking clarity on what further is required from the Dinka chiefs on how they want the money spent.

Seasonal Migration Update

15. (SBU) Chairman Plumbly noted that during his recent visit to the Abyei region, both the Dinka and the Misseriya told him that their primary concern is security. While the Dinka IDPs around Agok fear to return to their homes in Abyei, the Misseriya have been afraid to move south of the river Kiir this year on their annual migration.

Instead many have camped around Gulih, north of Abyei town. Mayok confirmed that there is a Misseriya concentration at Gulih, armed with weapons that include heavy 12.7 mm PKM machine guns. Currently, water and grass around Abyei is just sufficient to sustain the Misseriya cattle. He said that it seems that the NCP had encouraged the Misseriya to settle in Gulih and about a dozen other sites near the oil fields of Difra but the Misseriya had only constructed very flimsy structures and were not particularly about staying there. When the rainy season starts in two months, the Misseriya plan to return North.

16. (SBU) Plumbly agreed that the Misseriya he spoke to have no desire to remain in the area, but rather seek guarantees that they will be able to maintain their traditional way of life by migrating with their cattle southward annually through Abyei into Bahr al-Ghazal. CDA Fernandez noted that there are two reasons for the Misseriya encampments north of Abyei. First, they are being pressed out of their own traditional homeland by a combination of environmental pressures including desertification and the migration due to similar pressures of the Reizegat tribe from Darfur into Misseriya lands. Second, the National Congress Party (NCP) is seeking to manipulate the situation to its own advantage by encouraging the Misseriya to settle permanently in the Abyei region in order to create facts on the ground they can use later. But even though the Misseriya are subject to manipulation, they have their own agenda separate from the NCP.

17. (SBU) Mayok said he still hopes to organize a Dinka-Misseriya reconciliation conference that would set the ground rules for the cattle migration through Abyei, possibly in the remainder of the current migration season, but likely at the beginning of the next season. Chairman Plumbly remarked that other Misseriya have

KHARTOUM 00000439 002 OF 002

migrated south along the route to the west and east of Abyei, following an ad hoc conference with local leaders. The CDA commented that the CPA recognizes the Misseriya's right to migrate south with their cattle, but is unclear about their right to carry weapons. Mayok noted that the local population in Bahr al-Ghazal has been disarmed, therefore the migrating Misseriya also should be unarmed because "there always problems with their migration when they are the only ones armed". The CDA agreed, but remarked that policies are not consistent across the entire border. For example, Misseriya herdsmen are permitted to bring light weapons into parts of Bahr al Ghazal. As Chairman Plumbly noted, migration along the eastern corridor this year was worked out in an ad hoc fashion. A consistent arrangement needs to be reached for the entire border. Mayok noted that it will be the responsibility of the SPLA to make sure that the Misseriya do not misbehave.

Looming Food Problem in Agok

18. (SBU) Administrator Mayok reported that the IDP population around Agok is growing with the influx of new arrivals from neighboring Twich County to the south. The original IDP population in Agok comprised residents of Abyei who fled the fighting last May and who continue to fear to return. The newer arrivals are attracted by the humanitarian food distribution for the IDPs in Agok. Twich is plagued by flooding and a resulting food shortage. The influx of non-Abyei IDPs is complicating planning for the support of the IDP population there, he said. This situation can only worsen as the rainy season begins. "I have briefed the UN agencies here in Khartoum that we could have a famine," remarked Mayok, because of the poor harvest in Northern Bahr al-Ghazal.

19. (SBU) Mayok expressed frustration on the change of command of the Joint Integrated Unit (JIU) in Abyei. The NCP sought to make the current SAF deputy, LTC Ali, into the next commander (leadership should rotate between SAF and SPLA). LTC Ali does not have a good reputation and was on the ground when the JIU collapsed in May 2008 amidst ethnic fighting. Mayok believes that either both top officials should be changed or both kept as is with SPLA Colonel Valentino remaining in charge. He expected that such an outcome will probably prevail in the short run. He once again underscored the need for greater support for the local police or JIPU, which have almost no transportation to police a large and wild area.

Comment

- - - -

¶10. (SBU) Mayok's long-awaited travel to Khartoum to resolve the spending issue is a step in the right direction, but does not equal success. Even to get him here to engage the Ministry of Finance took great pressure from the AEC and the US Embassy and CG Juba. As we have seen in other situations, the NCP may simply find new excuses not to release funds to the AIA, once it complies with the current requirements, but Mayok should not give them the easy excuse of his absence. (This is exactly what the SPLM anticipates.) Still, by engaging in Khartoum, Mayok at least has finally put the ball back in the NCP's court and removed its latest justification for not complying with the terms of the June 2008 Abyei Roadmap agreement.

FERNANDEZ